

Hir ounded heer, that sonnish was of hewe,
She rente, and eek hir fingres longe and smale
She wrong ful ofte, and bad God on hir rewe,
And with the deeth to doon bote on hir bale.
Hir hewe, whylom bright, that tho was pale,
Bar wimes of hir wo and hir constreynte;
And thus she spak, sobbinge, in hir compleynte:

Alas! quod she, out of this regioun
I, woful wrecche and infortuned wight,
And born in corsed constellacioun,
Mot goon, and thus departen fro my knight;
Wo worth, alas! that ilke dayes light
On which I saw him first with eyen twayne,
That causeth me, and I him, al this peyne!

Therwith the teres from hir eyen two
Doun fille, as shour in Aperlil, ful swythe;
Hir whyte brest she bet, and for the wo
After the deeth she cryed a thousand sythe,
Sin he that wont hir wo was for to lythe,
She mot forgoon; for which disaventure
She held herself a forlost creature.

She seyde: How shal he doon, and I also?
How sholde I live, if that I from him twinne?
O dere herte eek, that I love so,
Who shal that sorwe sleen that ye ben inne?
O Calkas, fader, thyn be al this sinne!
O moder myn, that cleped were Argyve,
Wo worth that day that thou me bere on lyve!

To what fyn sholde I live and sorwen thus?
How sholde a fish withoute water dure?
What is Criseyde worth, from Troilus?
How sholde a plaunte or lyves creature
Live, withoute his kinde noriture?
for which ful oft a byword here I seye,
That, Rotelees, mot grene sone deye.

I shal don thus, sin neither sward ne darte
Dar I non handle, for the crueltee,
That ilke day that I from yow departe,
If sorwe of that nil not my bane be,
Than shal no mete or drinke come in me
Til I my soule out of my breste unshethe;
And thus myselven wol I do to dethe.

And, Troilus, my clothes everichoon
Shul blake been, in tokeninge, herte swete,
That I am as out of this world agoon,
That wont was yow to setten in quiete;
And of myn ordre, ay til deeth me mete,
The observaunce ever, in your absence,
Shal sorwe been, compleynte, and abstinence.

Myn herte and eek the woful goost therinne
Biquethe I, with your spirit to compleyne
Eternally, for they shul never twinne,
for though in erthe ytwinned be we twayne,
Yet in the feld of pitee, out of peyne,
That hight Elysos, shul we been yfere,
As Orpheus and Erudice his fere.

Thus herte myn, for Antenor, alas!
I sone shal be chaunged, as I wene.
But how shul ye don in this sorful cas,
How shal your tendre herte this sustene?
But herte myn, foryet this sorwe and tene,
And me also; for, soothly for to seye,
So ye wel fare, I recche not to deye.

How mighte it ever y red ben or ysonge,
The pleynte that she made in hir distresse?
I noot; but, as for me, my litel tonge,
If I discreven wolde hir hevinesse,
It sholde make hir sorwe seme lesse
Than that it was, and childishly deface
Hir heigh compleynte, and therefore I it pace.

Pandare, which that sent from Troilus
Was to Criseyde, as ye han herd devyse,
That for the beste it was accorded thus,
And he ful glad to doon him that servyse,
Unto Criseyde, in a ful secree wyse,
Theras she lay in torment and in rage,
Com hir to telle al hoolly his message.

And fond that she hirselven gan to tete
ful pitously; for with hir salte teres
Hir brest, hir face ybathed was ful wete;
The mighty tresses of hir sonnish heres,
Unbroyden, hangen al aboute hir eres;
Which yaf him verray signal of martyre
Of deeth, which that hir herte gan desyre.

Whan she him saw, she gan for sorwe anoon
Hir tery face atwixe hir armes hyde,
for which this Pandare is so wo bigoon,
That in the hous he mighte unneth abide,
As he that pitee felte on every syde,
for if Criseyde hadde erst compleyned sore,
Tho gan she pleyne a thousand tymes more.

And in hir aspre pleynte than she seyde:
Pandare first of joyes mo than two
Was cause causinge unto me, Criseyde,
That now transmued been in cruel wo.
Wher shal I seye to yow Wel come or no,
That alderfirst me broughte into servyse
Of love, alas! that endeth in swich wyse?

Endeth than love in wo? Ye, or men lyeth!
And alle worldly blisse, as thinketh me,
The ende of blisse ay sorwe it occupyeth;
And whoso troweth not that it so be,
Lat him upon me, woful wrecche, ysee,
That myself hate, and ay my birthe acorse,
feling alwey, fro wikke I go to worse.

Whoso me seeth, he seeth sorwe al at ones,
Peine, torment, pleynte, wo, distresse.
Out of my woful body harm ther noon is,
As anguish, langour, cruel bitternesse,
Anoy, smert, drede, fury, and eek siknesse.
I trowe, ywis, from hevne teres reyne,
for pitee of myn aspre and cruel peyne!

And thou, my suster, ful of discomfort,
Quod Pandarus, what thenkestow to do?
Why ne hastow to thyselfen som resport,
Why woltow thus thyselfe, alas, fordo?
Leef al this werk and tak now hede to
That I shal seyn, and herkne, of good entente,
This, which by me thy Troilus thee sente.

Torned hir tho Criseyde, a wo makinge
So greet that it a deeth was for to see:
Alas! quod she, what wordes may ye bringe?
What wol my dere herte seyn to me,
Which that I drede nevermo to see?
Wol he have pleynte or teres, er I wende?
I have ynowe, if he therafter sende!

She was right swich to seen in hir visage
As is that wight that men on bere binde;
Hir face, lyk of Paradys the image,
Was al ychaunged in another kinde.
The pleye, the laughtre men was wont to finde
In hir, and eek hir joyes everychone,
Ben fled, and thus lyth now Criseyde allone.

Aboute hir eyen two a purple ring
Bitrent, in sothfast tokninge of hir peyne,
That to biholde it was a dedly thing,
for which Pandare mighte not restreigne
The teres from his eyen for to reyne.
But natheles, as he best mighte, he seyde
from Troilus thise wordes to Criseyde:

Lo, nece, I trowe ye han herd al how
The king, with othere lordes, for the beste,
hath mad eschaunge of Antenor and yow,
That cause is of this sorwe and this unreste.
But how this cas doth Troilus moleste,
That may non erthely mannes tonge seye;
for verray wo his wit is al aweye.

for which we han so sorwed, he and I,
That into litel bothe it hadde us slawe;
But thurgh my conseil this day, fynally,
Besomwhat is fro weping now withdrawe.
And semeth me that he desyareth fawe
With yow to been al night, for to devyse
Remede in this, if ther were any wyse.

This, short and pleyne, theffect of my message,
As ferforth as my wit can comprehende,
for ye, that been of torment in swich rage,
May to no long prologe as now entende;
And herupon ye may answer him sende.
And, for the love of God, my nece dere,
So leef this wo er Troilus be here.

Gret is my wo, quod she, and sighte sore,
As she that feleth dedly sharp distresse;
But yet to me his sorwe is muchel more,
That love him bet than he himself, I gesse.
Alas! for me hath he swich hevinesse?
Can he for me so pitously compleyne?
Ywis, this sorwe doubleth al my peyne.

Grevous to me, God wot, is for to twinne,
Quod she, but yet it hardere is to me
To seen that sorwe which that he is inne;
for wel wot I, it wol my bane be;
And deye I wol in certayn, tho quod she;
But bidde him come, er deeth, that thus me threteth,
Dryve out that goost, which in myn herte beteth.

Thise wordes seyde, she on hir armes two
fil gruf, and gan to wepe pitously.
Quod Pandarus: Alas! why do ye so,
Syn wel ye wot the tyme is faste by,
That he shal come? Arys up hastily,
That he yow nat biwopen thus ne finde,
But ye wol han him wood out of his minde!

for wiste he that ye ferde in this manere,
He wolde himselve slee; and if I wende
To han this fare, he sholde not come here
for al the good that Pryam may despende.
for to what fyn he wolde anoon pretende,
That knowe I wel; and forthy yet I seye,
So leef this sorwe, or platly he wol deye.

And shapeth yow his sorwe for to abregge,
And nought encresse, leve nece swete;
Beth rather to him cause of flat than egge,
And with som wysdom ye his sorwes bete.
What helpeth it to wopen ful a strete,
Or though ye bothe in salte teres dreynte?
Bet is a tyme of cure ay than of pleynte.

I mene thus; whan I him hider bringe,
Sin ye ben wyse, and bothe of oon assent,
So shapeth how distourbe your goinge,
Or come ayen, sone after ye be went.
Wommen ben wyse in short avysement;
And lat sen how your wit shal now avayle;
And what that I may helpe, it shal not fayle.

Go, quod Criseyde, and uncle, trewely,
I shal don al my might, me to restreigne
from weping in his sight, and bisily,
him for to glade, I shal don al my peyne,
And in myn herte seken every veyne;
If to this soor ther may be founden salve,
It shal not lakken, certain, on myn halve.

Goth Pandarus, and Troilus he soughte,
Til in a temple he fond him al allone,
As he that of his lyf no lenger roughete;
But to the pitouse goddes everichone
ful tendrely he preyde, and made his mone,
To doon him sone out of this world to pace;
for wel he thoughte ther was non other grace.

And shortly, al the sothe for to seye,
He was so fallen in despayr that day,
That outrely he shoop him for to deye.
for right thus was his argument alwey:
He seyde, he nas but loren, waylawey!
for al that comth, comth by necessitee;
Thus to be lorn, it is my destinee.